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# Scholarship in Action and the Expansive Mission of Higher Education

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Scholarship in Action and the Expansive Mission of Higher Education  
Chancellor Nancy Cantor<sup>1</sup>

“The words *scholarship* and *action* are powerful words because they imply that only in action, only in an intense desire, can we grow as individuals. When we enter Syracuse University, we must crave a discovery of new knowledge, our scholarship. When we leave Syracuse University, we must integrate that knowledge in order to have a new understanding for how we can change our world, our action.”

“I began as a transfer student, through struggle and insistence; I became part of the roots of Syracuse University. In one year’s time, I was no longer a transfer. I live for what I have learned here, shared here, and opened my eyes to here. I have always been told that talent creates its own opportunities. However, now, to me, it seems that intense desire creates not only its own opportunities, but its own talents.”

Angelo Roefaro, Class of 2007  
Whitman School Commencement Marshal

As Angelo’s compelling journey demonstrates, Syracuse is a place for talent, desire, and opportunity to flourish, and that is what is at the heart of “Scholarship in Action”—the vision and agenda that emerged from our university and community-wide exploration of the Soul of Syracuse three years ago. As a concept and as a program, it is already giving us a high profile in the national search for ways higher education can address the accelerating changes in knowledge and technology and the seriousness of the challenges ahead for our society and our world.<sup>2</sup> It is also the basis for our ambitious fundraising campaign, which is off to a very successful start.

Today, I’d like to give you a progress report on Scholarship in Action, taking note of the many parts of campus working together to make it happen, and inviting everyone to get involved.

Before we consider the many projects and partnerships already underway—and note how much they build on our longstanding strengths and shared values as an institution and a community—I think it is important to situate our vision in the broader context of the expansive mission of higher education.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Address to the campus community, January 23, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Nancy Cantor, “Building Intellectual and Social Capital through Diversity and Innovation,” KeyBank Diversity Thought Leadership Series, The City Club of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio, 9 June 2006; The National Academies, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future* (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2006). The Executive Summary of this report is available online at [http://fermat.nap.edu/execsumm\\_pdf/11463.pdf](http://fermat.nap.edu/execsumm_pdf/11463.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Adrianna J. Kezar, Tony C. Chambers, and John C. Burkhardt, eds., *Higher Education for the Public Good* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass-John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2005).

*Expansive Mission of Higher Education: Historical and Contemporary*

Higher education is a public good--the teacher of youth, a creator of citizens, a birthplace of new ideas, discoveries, and creations, and an indispensable partner in the search for answers to society's most critical issues. It preserves the past and nurtures the future. As knowledge and technology become more important, our mission is expanding. I see three aspects of this, and each one has both "local" Syracuse precedents and national historical significance.

*Innovation that matters.* Colleges and universities have long been primary engines of innovation, complementing and often surpassing R&D elsewhere. In its *Solutions for our Future* campaign, the American Council on Education shows how university-based discoveries have dramatically changed our lives from the ways we do business, practice medicine, or inform ourselves, with inventions ranging from overnight express to pacemakers to Internet web-browsers.<sup>4</sup> Innovation is an honored tradition. We can point with pride to the early agricultural and biological research at our land-grant institutions, post-World War II action research in the social sciences, and the groundbreaking build-up of federally supported science and technology in the Sputnik era.

At Syracuse, we need only recall the work of Burton Blatt, who exposed the horrors of institutionalization for the developmentally disabled and sparked the drive to empty out mental hospitals and provide humane care in the community. Before him, in 1924, Floyd Allport started the world's first Social Psychology Training Program here. And, to name just one other example, we are proud of the immensely productive science and technology collaborations that existed between Syracuse University and the GE Electronics Lab previously located in Syracuse.

Now the American public, American industry, and the government are looking to universities with renewed expectations that we produce *innovation that matters*--as IBM refers to the double bottom line of doing well and doing good.<sup>5</sup> This includes the critical task of reinventing our cities and towns in a post-manufacturing, highly competitive global knowledge economy.

At the same time, however, we are being asked to do this work without some of the federal and industrial research support we once had. For example, the erosion of support at Fermi Labs compelled our particle physics colleagues to turn to international sites for research. And security restrictions on international collaboration have made some work in science and technology harder to do. The federal ban on funds for stem cell research is an impediment in the biosciences, although many states--including, we hope, New York--are stepping in with support. Similarly, some of the most exciting action research in the social and behavioral sciences--such as research on questions of

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.solutionsforourfuture.org>, American Council on Education, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> *Innovation That Matters*, IBM Conference, Rome, 2006.

democratic culture, social and religious pluralism, and global conflict--faces increased scrutiny, and federal agencies are reluctant to support it.

Yet, I believe strongly that Syracuse is positioned to respond with vigor to the demand for innovative solutions, and we are raising the necessary support. We have shown that we can attract and support very high-quality faculty across the technical disciplines, as demonstrated by the appointment of two NSF CAREER Awardees each of the last two years. As the Life Sciences Building rises on the east side of campus, as Hinds Hall is completed for Information Studies on the Quad, and as the Center of Excellence Headquarters is built on the Connective Corridor, we recognize that we must invest--and we are--in technology infrastructure that will drive the growth of our sponsored programs and ensure that we are positioned for innovation. We want to support new, nimble relationships across departments and schools and colleges. We are assembling interdisciplinary teams that can easily interface with industry and community partners on problems that matter, for example, in the crucial arenas of cell signaling, biocomplexity, and biomaterials in the Life Sciences. All across the University, sponsored research is central to our mission of enriching knowledge, strengthening our various communities, and making our students' education more relevant.

*Tapping a diverse talent pool.* A second vital part of the public mission of higher education is to draw upon the huge, growing, and diverse talent pool that is still largely untapped in our cities and towns, preparing students from all groups for all careers, whether in science and technology, business and the professions, or as humanists, artists and designers changing the face of our communities and the substance of our social life. We must make visible commitments to--and hold ourselves accountable for--educational access and opportunity for those who will lead our nation forward.

Here, too, there is historical precedent. One need only recall the tremendous opportunities of the G.I. Bill, the build-up of federal and state student financial aid, the passage of civil rights and affirmative action legislation to open doors of opportunity in education and employment, and--similarly--the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act. All along, Syracuse University was right in the thick of things, taking not only an unparalleled number of returning G.I.s after WWII, but also Japanese American internees. The University pursued an aggressive and inclusive financial aid support policy well before most private institutions, and it pioneered an agenda for inclusiveness in public schools and higher education.

Today, like our peer institutions, we must redouble our commitments to educational opportunity, even as the national climate succumbs to fierce individual rights competition over access and shows little appetite to address the compelling collective case for social justice and equity in education.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See Nancy Cantor, *Scholarship in Action: Why Community Commitment Matters*, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education, the University of Michigan, January 12, 2007.

*Incubating democracy.* Higher education has traditionally instilled in each new generation a commitment to responsible citizenship and democracy. Today, as tragic and dangerous global issues impinge in ever more intimate ways, we need to call upon our best knowledge and keenest ethical sensibilities. If higher education is to continue to be a public good, we must create not only knowledge but also the wisdom to use that knowledge to advance human dignity, to defend and strive for liberty, and to promote the well-being of our own people *and* of those who do not belong to us, are not like us, and--in many cases--do not like us.

To do this, higher education must engage the public consciousness and cultivate a sense of shared responsibility on such issues as conflict and peace, inter-group relations, and democratic culture. Both in Syracuse and at SU, we have proud examples of these efforts: from abolition to the struggle for women's suffrage, from the nation's first grassroots peace council to PARC, the longstanding program in conflict resolution at the Maxwell School.

The time is right again for passionate engagement with a challenged and divided world, whether we meet it here in Central New York, in our nation's capital, or in other places that may be far away--such as Tel Aviv, London, or Quito--but quite close in terms of our shared fates.

#### *Scholarship in Action and the Three Facets of an Expansive Mission*

I now want to turn to Scholarship in Action, an agenda that positions us to use our institutional history and current strengths to address the expansive mission of higher education.

Scholarship in Action is grounded in the belief that we open up rich new opportunities for learning, innovation, and discovery in settings where we are deeply engaged with each other and with "communities of experts" on and off our campus. Our cross-disciplinary collaborations are invaluable in addressing critical societal issues--whether we're talking about environmental sustainability, failing schools or shrinking cities. We are focusing on areas where we are strong and we can make a difference.

*Clusters of academic excellence.* In pursuing real progress in discovery and innovation--whether in high-energy physics, bioethics, or healthy aging--more and more scholars, students, and citizens are coming to favor cross-disciplinary collaboration.<sup>7</sup>

Accordingly, a centerpiece of Scholarship in Action is the creation of *clusters of scholarly excellence*. They may take many forms. Some are consortia among colleges and universities, such as the Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems, and the Humanities Corridor funded by the Mellon Foundation. Others are collaborations here on campus, scholarship founded on our traditional strengths. In gerontology, for example, where we have a 35-year history of excellence, our University

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, "*The Responsive Ph.D.: Innovations in Doctoral Education*," The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, Princeton, N.J., September, 2005.

Gerontology Center now draws upon faculty and students from more than a dozen disciplines. As part of Scholarship in Action, they are focusing on critically relevant issues, such as aging and disabilities.

The great potential of these clusters lies in the richness and dynamism of the exchanges within them, as scholars work back and forth between the most exciting questions in their disciplines and the most vexing societal issues of our day. At the same time, our students--graduate, professional, and undergraduate--have unique opportunities to be grounded both in their disciplines and in the world.

Our new Institute for the Study of the Judiciary, Politics, and the Media, for example, draws faculty and students from the College of Law, the Maxwell School, and the Newhouse School. Professionals from each of these fields--judges, lawyers, public policy experts, journalists--also participate, exchanging ideas and offering opportunities to examine how politics and the media affect such timely issues as the independence of the courts. The Institute conducts public opinion research and speaks to a national audience, while also providing unparalleled learning opportunities for our students. It is the first institute of its kind on this topic in the nation.

*Embedding diversity in our excellence.* In IJPM, and elsewhere, the quality of intellectual diversity is greatly enhanced by the insights of those who've been positioned in society at different angles and bring different points of view. To keep our work fresh and vital--and to democratize our institution--we must engage a multiplicity of voices among those who study, teach, and work here, and we intend to embed those voices directly within our most innovative educational and scholarly agendas. Diversity--both intellectual and social--is central to our work. It is not a side pursuit. We must do more to include those who are crucial to our success, and we are developing ways to do this well.

Our new Haudenosaunee Promise Scholarship Program is part of our expanding engagement with neighboring indigenous Nations, and it has set all-time records for the size of the applicant pool and the enrollment of Native students. At the same time, we have enhanced our course offerings in the Native Studies Program and established major new advocacy and research centers, such as the Center for Indigenous Law, Governance, and Citizenship in the College of Law. The Native Student Support Program, a joint project of Academic and Student -Affairs--pairing curricular with co-curricular programming--builds on the success of our award-winning WellsLink Program for first-year students of color.<sup>8</sup> And The Institutional Culture Committee, comprised of students, faculty, staff, and alumni, is seeking even more opportunities for our students to participate in diverse and democratic settings.

For too long and in too many institutions, the voices of social justice and opportunity have been heard in a vacuum. Now, universities are trying to integrate these

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<sup>8</sup> The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) awarded The WellsLink Program the 2006 NASPA Silver Excellence Award in recognition of its successes in student retention and support (with a 98% freshman-sophomore retention rate this year for students in the program).

values in courses and programs--at Syracuse, some examples include: the diversity initiative integrated into Writing 105/205, the new Intergroup Dialogue Project, Creative Writing in the Community, a program offered by our award-winning poets and fiction writers, and the Civic Engagement and Global Awareness requirements for the Renee Crown Honors Program.

Together, our faculty, staff, and students are changing our campus culture, and bringing SU recognition in the process. For example, we are one of the top 100 colleges and universities for LGBT students.<sup>9</sup> Our new LGBT Studies Program now offers an interdisciplinary minor. The LGBT Resource Center has also been a source of creative programming. This semester it is co-sponsoring an Intergroup Dialogue Course on Sexual Orientation. The changing climate has encouraged people all over campus to speak up. For example, SU graduate students from many disciplines conceived and wrote the book *Interrupting Heteronormativity*, published by our own Graduate School with support from the LGBT Resource Center. This is a landmark collection of scholarship on the pedagogy of inclusiveness, and it beautifully exemplifies Scholarship in Action.

*Engaging the world.* To embed our scholarship profoundly in reality, we must look outward to communities of experts beyond the campus. They will help us deepen our sense of communal responsibility for the most urgent issues of our city, nation and world. These may be highly “local” issues, such as children succeeding in our Syracuse City Schools or the restoration of Onondaga Lake, but they are also part of larger concerns, such as worldwide literacy and global environmental sustainability.

And as we team up with communities of experts--be they private citizens or public servants, children or adults--inevitably we find the tables turning on who the “expert” is.

For example, Nathalie Quezada, a senior, created the Cross-Cultural Connections Program, in collaboration with Partners in Learning Inc. and the West Side Learning Center, to connect Latino youth between the ages of 14-21 with Syracuse police officers to encourage mutual understanding and respect. The officers found themselves in the uncustomary position of learning from the students. Nathalie says the students taught the police officers Spanish and a whole lot more.

I hear similar reactions from students teaching school children to read as part of the SU Literacy Corps and the Students in Free Enterprise who are helping women and minority entrepreneurs start new businesses. They tell stories about the surprising exchanges that redefine who teaches and who learns. Many say their experiences have led them to feel an intense commitment to those working to turn our city around.

As academics--students, faculty, University staff--we have the “tools” to shine a light on how our democracy works or doesn’t, but we must go another step and make

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<sup>9</sup> See, the “*Advocate College Guide for LGBT Students*,” 2006.

room for the voices of others so we can learn from them and collaborate with them to make a difference. And our campus is doing exactly that.

Consider the amazing proliferation of literacy projects of all kinds going on now in partnerships that have made Syracuse a pioneering site for the literacy movement nationally.<sup>10</sup> New voices of all ages are using multiple media (cameras, poetry, digital technology, storytelling and filmmaking) to narrate their experiences in locations and contexts all across the City and beyond--from schools to senior centers to the Onondaga County Justice Center, in places of meaning in the City's neighborhoods, from restaurants to community centers to local libraries.

These deep and sustained projects involve faculty and students from across our campus--in departments too numerous to list, from Arts & Sciences, Education, Engineering and Computer Science, Visual and Performing Arts, Information Studies, Newhouse, and more, teaming up with the Syracuse City School District in the Partnership for Better Education and with many community groups, centers, agencies, and corporate sponsors.

And there are real products to show. The South Side Community Coalition is teaming up with faculty and students from Newhouse to produce a monthly newspaper. University College is publishing *Stone Canoe*, a journal of arts and ideas for the Upstate New York community. The New City Community Press is about to publish a book *Soul Talk: Inner Voices*--featuring the poetry and photographs of Syracuse City School students. These students had opportunities to interact with University Lecturer and acclaimed urban poet Luis Rodriguez and to work with teachers throughout the district who prepared themselves in workshops organized by faculty members from the Reading and Language Arts Program in Education and the Writing Program in Arts & Sciences.

As we go forward with these partnerships, we must keep in mind that securing human rights, peace, and social justice will take everyone's voice, from world leaders to local scholars, students, and citizen activists. In this regard, I think back on the extraordinary week of October 17-21 on this campus. The University Lectures brought Wangari Maathai, the Nobel Peace Prize winner and founder of the Green Belt Movement, here to speak. Then diplomats and activists from all over the world joined groups from our campus and our community to explore possible avenues toward peace, a goal too important to leave to diplomats and national governments alone. We called this symposium a peace summit and entitled it "Small World/Big Divides: Building Bridges in an Age of Extremes." Then, on the weekend, our Women's Studies Program sponsored a three-day Feminism and War Conference that drew scholars and activists of courage from around the nation, including an opening dialogue, co-sponsored by the Syracuse Symposium, with citizen-activist Cindy Sheehan and feminist scholar Cynthia Enloe.

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<sup>10</sup> Consider the work of Syracuse community activist and SU alumna, Ruth Colvin, who founded Literacy Volunteers of America, for which she recently received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, 2006, from President Bush



This dialogue must continue, and the array of Syracuse scholars, students, and citizens working on peace---in regions far and near---means that it will. We see this already in our exciting new Muslim Cultures Program in SU –Abroad-London. Other new and important programs have been organized around aspects of religion, culture, the media, and society with funds from the Luce, Carnegie, and Ford foundations.

As our global dialogues continue, we must not forget the divides and conflicts that hamper equality and opportunity at home. That’s why we are committed to the Community Wide Dialogues to End Racism and to the dialogues on religious pluralism on campus, as well as those sponsored by the InterReligious Council and Women Transcending Boundaries. I am excited that we are connecting the local to the global, as the Africa Initiative is doing by bringing to the table our newly immigrated neighbors.

We must break the deliberate silences of history, as we did in the recently concluded yearlong lecture series organized by Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation and sponsored by so many departments at SU and SUNY-ESF. Huge audiences from both campus and community packed the main theater of Syracuse Stage to hear indigenous leaders discuss “Onondaga Land Rights and Our Common Future.” Indeed, the notion of a common future must be the foundation on which we build our efforts.

*Scholarship in Action: Timely and Rewarding*

In truth, we are not alone, either in terms of our peer institutions in higher education or the many foundations, corporations, agencies, friends, and alumni who want to support us, and to pool their expertise with ours. In turn, the visibility and stature of our institution continues to grow as we participate actively and in leadership roles in state, national, and global networks.

Just recently, we were invited to be part of the “first class” of peer institutions included in the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s new classification of Community Engagement.<sup>11</sup> This is a designation of excellence in curricular and scholarly engagement within communities, and it was given to only 75 institutions around the nation. It recognizes what *you* have accomplished. Our faculty, staff, and students are seen as national leaders in this vitally important endeavor.

We have also received major support for two important initiatives that put us directly in networks of peer institutions, garner considerable exposure and support from external communities of experts, and provide outstanding opportunities to build and extend our academic strengths and benefit our community.

The Kauffman Foundation has just named Syracuse as one of eight new members of their Campus Entrepreneurship Initiative, based on our comprehensive proposal for campus-community entrepreneurship in three broad areas: technology; art and design;

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<sup>11</sup> See the report, prepared by Associate Provost Sandra Hurd, for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *Community Engagement Classification*, Syracuse University, September 2006, for a sampling of the University’s many long-standing and new engagement initiatives.

and neighborhood development. The Kauffman Initiative builds on our number one-ranked entrepreneurship program at the Whitman School and goes on to include a curriculum and research agenda that touches every one of our schools and colleges, as well as five partner institutions in our region.

Through the Kauffman Initiative, we are collaborating with corporations, foundations, and government partners to nurture entrepreneurship at three community sites in Syracuse: The South Side Innovation Center for minority and women entrepreneurs, the Center of Excellence, and The Warehouse and Near West Side Arts Quarter, where we hope a center for new art, design and technology can thrive and expand as the Connective Corridor comes to life. Faculty and students from across our campus are already engaged at each of these sites, and the Kauffman Initiative will provide new opportunities for many more to join them--hopefully some of you in this audience today.

The second major new initiative has arisen because we won a national competition to become the new home of Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, which is a consortium of more than 75 colleges, universities and arts institutes organized in 1999 and housed at the University of Michigan since then. Imagining America was established to promote the democratic reach of the humanities, arts, and design through public scholarship and campus-community partnerships. Syracuse University was chosen to lead this coalition because we have longstanding campus-community partnerships in the arts--such as the Community Folk Art Center, the Paul Robeson Performing Arts Company, and Syracuse Stage--and we keep creating new partnerships--such as the Syracuse International Film & Video Festival, and the Urban Arts Education Program and Technology Center at Beauchamp Library.

At SU, Imagining America will have its home in the new Center for the Public and Collaborative Humanities in the Tolley Building. It will reach out not only to the City, but also to colleagues in Architecture, Visual and Performing Arts, Maxwell, Newhouse, and more. In September, we will also host the national conference of Imagining America right here in Syracuse. We will convene other conferences and meetings in New York City, D.C., and L.A., and perhaps in one of our SU Abroad sites.

In addition, Imagining America is joining other organizations and foundations, such as the MLA and the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Foundation, in a national conversation on faculty tenure and promotion-----specifically, on how to evaluate and reward public scholarship, accomplishments in the performing or visual arts, broadcast journalism, community development, or other work not usually presented best in such traditional forms as a book or journal article. This effort dovetails beautifully with the study-groups that the Academic Affairs Committee of the Senate and the Vice Chancellor's Office are holding on our campus, and it demonstrates, once again, the synergy between our vision and those of our peer institutions.

*Reinventing Communities, Reinventing Universities*

A signature feature of Scholarship in Action is its operational structure. It draws together teams of people, as we see in the Kauffman Initiative and Imagining America, who may have operated relatively independently in the past. It calls for agile collaborations--much like SWAT teams--that integrate multiple activities and divisions of our institution. While this may not be easy, the rewards can be considerable, both for the efficiency with which we can operate and the creativity and impact of our contributions. Fortunately, Syracuse has a great deal of experience in collaboration, and even more is happening every day.

Consider the broad area of environmental sustainability, in which we are showing significant leadership in ways that speak to the breadth of our interdisciplinary strengths in this area--strengths built on the earlier EnSPIRE campus initiative. Our students are interested, the relevant staff is engaged, our corporate and community partners are eager to get involved, and the problems are critically important.

Scholarship in Action in this area of environmental sustainability requires a whole new way of doing "business:" forming strategic alliances with corporations, creating joint educational programs, purchasing energy from sustainable sources, designing green buildings, and connecting with the communities of experts, from citizens to Nations, that inform our innovations. In the process, the boundaries inevitably become blurred between teaching, research, and engagement, and collaborations cross the lines between academic and administrative units of the University. It takes the best efforts of many people to make progress.

As we go forward, the applicability and impact of our work will spread. We are collaborating and interacting with institutions, corporations, NGOs, and environmental groups around our nation, and indeed across the globe. No one and no place is immune from worries over how to sustain our environment and enhance quality of life.

Let me list just a few examples of our broad-based activity in this area.

- A set of SU and SUNY-ESF faculty from disciplines including the sciences, engineering, law, and policy are partnering to develop an innovative, highly interdisciplinary joint doctoral program to prepare future environmental leaders, whether as scientists in industry or academia, or as policy makers at the local, state, or federal level.
- Faculty from all over our campus and SUNY-ESF are teaming up to take their scientific and policy expertise from the laboratory to the field, pursuing scientific innovation and policy applications in areas that include water remediation, acid rain, and mercury pollution. Team-taught courses--such as the course on the climate change problem taught last spring by faculty from Law, Maxwell, SUNY-ESF, and the Department of Earth Sciences--are already providing recommendations for new environmental regulations to policy makers on Capitol Hill and elsewhere.

- A campus-wide sustainability committee, with staff, students, and faculty from all over campus and SUNY-ESF, is working on green energy, buildings, and transportation, among other areas, and collaborating with ENERGY STAR (from E.P.A. and the Department of Energy), the U.S. Green Building Council, and Earth Share, a national not-for-profit organization. Their work, which has already garnered an award for the University from E.P.A., can be followed on the sustainable campus website: <http://sustainablecampus.syr.edu>.
- The Center of Excellence, with headquarters going up at a brownfield site downtown, includes 12 educational and research institutions and over 140 firms, partnering with global brand names like Carrier, Otis, and Siemens, and with important engines of our local economy like O'Brien & Gere, C&S, and Sensis. Aided by our Office of Corporate Relations, they form strategic partnerships to pool talent and make progress in three crucial areas: indoor environmental quality, water resources, and clean and renewable energy. Faculty and students from eight of our schools and colleges--ranging from Arts & Sciences to Architecture--are currently involved in the Center's activities, and there are productive links with other campus centers, such as the Environmental Finance Center and the New York State Science & Technology Law Center.
- Faculty and students from across our campus and SUNY-ESF are also teaming up with community partners to pursue relevant aspects of environmental justice, including the remediation of Onondaga Lake, the siting of new waste-sewage treatment plants, and the quality of health in several of our City's most challenged neighborhoods. The Ford Foundation has recently awarded a grant to the Department of African American Studies on gender, health, and environmental justice, and they will partner with many community groups at the Community Folk Art Center and the Syracuse Community Health Center.

The willingness to pool our resources--intellectual, human, and social capital--with communities of experts, as we are clearly doing in the environmental area, is central to the success of Scholarship in Action. And we see this happening in many important areas, including another vital one, community development, in which SU also has a longstanding tradition of excellence.

Community development is a signature of this campus, from our Community Development Law Clinic to work in community health by the College of Human Services and Health Professions, from the Community Benchmarks and Community Geography programs in Maxwell to Architecture's Community Design Center and its new UPSTATE: A Center for Design, Research and Real Estate. The service learning courses by the Mary Ann Shaw Center for Public and Community Service and the outreach of University College are critical elements here. This tradition is proving extremely

beneficial as we expand our strategic collaborations in the City, from the partnership between our Faculty for Community Engagement and the South Side Community Coalition, to the Partnership for Better Education with the Syracuse City School District.

One new example already drawing on this expertise is the Connective Corridor, the urban pathway that will carve out an arts district from our “hill” into downtown, to The Warehouse and the Near West Side. It includes historic churches, community art spaces such as the Everson Museum and the Museum of Science and Technology, performance spaces such as the venerable Landmark Theatre and the newer experimental Redhouse, and our signature SU-community arts venues on East Genesee Street.

The Corridor is serving as one of many test cases around the nation of public-private partnerships in community development and design. Time Warner, National Grid, our entire federal delegation, and the City of Syracuse have teamed up on this project. The Corridor has also inspired wonderful collaborations between our Coalition of Museum and Art Centers and community arts groups, such as TH3, that brings people to galleries on the Corridor, from the Delavan to our Warehouse, on the third Thursday of every month.

Our students have also taken advantage of venues along the Corridor to program activities, and I know that Ryan Kelly, the SA president, will encourage this trend. This year, for the first time, students used the Landmark Theatre for events featuring former Vice President Al Gore and comedy legend Bill Cosby. Undergraduates in our new Bandier Program for Music and the Entertainment Industries will likely pursue internships at the Landmark, and graduate students in the Goldring Arts Journalism Program, which is based at The Warehouse, are busy writing about the Corridor and its many venues.<sup>12</sup>

Because the neighborhoods along this pathway are a vital part of the Connective Corridor, it is being designed to respect community, enhance the urban landscape, and increase accessibility for people with disabilities. Therefore our expertise, from landscape architecture to public memory, is highly relevant here, and many SU faculty and students are already engaged. An honors course, *Building With a Conscience*, has brought to life the Civil Rights-era history of Grace Episcopal Church and assisted the congregation in developing a plan for its historic preservation. Faculty and students in Visual and Performing Arts are working with community partners on public art initiatives for the Corridor. Students in the Public Relations Department in Newhouse continue to develop plans for promoting the arts, businesses, and public events along the Corridor. And several different campus groups, including the student-staff-faculty Task Force on Disabilities and students and faculty in Information Studies, Industrial Design, and Engineering, are generating new designs and technology to ensure the Corridor is accessible. Every day, new opportunities arise as the Corridor takes shape, and I invite others to join as it goes forward.

### *Building on Strength, Honoring History*

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<sup>12</sup> Carl Yost, “*Making a Connection*,” Central New York Magazine, January/February, 2007, 118-125.

And, as we go forward, we should note that all reinvention is about reconnecting with history, and figuring out how to honor it by building on its value in a new world. That is precisely what Scholarship in Action is doing--finding strength in our institutional history (disciplines, activism, leadership) and in the history of this remarkable region to guide us in a new world. And as we honor our history, we also must be willing to be bold, agile, and both operationally and substantively risk taking.

In this very spirit, I invite everyone to join me now to tour and celebrate the opening of our “new” but distinctly historic Tolley Building, once built to house the Leopold Von Ranke library, and now home to the Center for Public and Collaborative Humanities. Here we will find the mix of “classic” and “experimental,” disciplinary and interdisciplinary, new programs and longstanding traditional strengths that we so want to see at Syracuse. This wonderful building is positioned at the center of our campus, looking out to the world. It is ever so fitting that it does, for this building was designed by Archimedes Russell in 1887-89 during the years of greatest growth for the City of Syracuse. As we pursue Scholarship in Action together, let us take note of where we came from and how we can generate just such a place of opportunity by sharing our knowledge generously and engaging as citizen-scholars, staff, and students in making a difference that matters in our world.

And, when we think of making a difference, we, of course, turn to the students who will shape this world. In that regard, I began today with the words of a student about to graduate, so let me close with those of Sandra Appiah, a first-year Newhouse student, after she was named a 2006 New York Times College Scholar. She describes her experiences in high school making a mini-documentary in Thailand as follows:

“As a young black woman born in Ghana, raised in Italy, and living in the ghetto of New York City, where would I even get the idea of traveling to another country, 9,000 miles away, without any money coming from my pockets? I felt like I was dreaming. But the day I stepped on the plane I started realizing it was a reality ...”

“When I returned from this trip ... I had become a more rounded person with much more respect for the world around me, and different views about that world ... (The trip) taught me one big lesson: With every challenge or obstacle that comes your way, a great victory is ahead if you don’t give up.”

As Sandra Appiah takes her next journey, and as we join her in Scholarship in Action, let’s consider the lives we can touch, right here in Syracuse, and how they bring us closer to the wider world whose future we can have a hand in shaping toward a more just, equitable, and peaceful place.